

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 207862

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PFOR, NU

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE

REF: (A) STATE 206945 (B) MANAGUA 3007

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN THIS MORNING'S ISSUE OF THE WASHINGTON POST. IT DESCRIBES A LETTER SENT BY A GROUP OF CAPUCHIN MISSIONARIES TO TWENTY U.S. SENATORS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE DETAILING PURPORTED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NICARAGUA. ASSUME LETTER IS ONE WHICH CIRCULATED EARLIER AND WHICH SENATOR KENNEDY PUBLISHED IN JULY 19 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

2. TEXT FOLLOWS. QUOTE: DETROIT - TWENTY-ONE U.S. ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES HAVE APPEALED TO CONGRESS TO CALL  
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ATTENTION TO WHAT THEY CLAIM ARE DOCUMENTED INSTANCES OF

TORTURE AND MURDER IN NICARAGUA.

IN A LETTER TO SOME 20 SENATORS AND TO MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE, CAPUCHINS OF THE ST. JOSEPH PROVINCE HERE WHO SERVE IN NICARAGUA SPOKE OF "SERIOUS INFRACTIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF NICARAGUAN PEOPLE" LIVING IN VARIOUS MOUNTAIN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. ENCLOSED WITH THEIR LETTER TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WAS A LETTER SENT BY THE CAPUCHINS TO THE PRESIDENT OF NICARAGUA, GEN. ANASTASIO SOMOZA-DEBAYLE LAST JUNE, IN WHICH THEY ENCLOSED "DOCUMENTATION OF THE CASES OF TERRORISM IN THE DEPARTMENT OF NUEVA SEGOVIA, AND A SECTION OF MADIZ, AND INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF SIUNA AND RAMA, BOTH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ZELAYA."

THEY ALSO FORWARDED THE SAME DOCUMENTATION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NICARAGUAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE, BISHOP SALAZAR ESPINOZA OF LEON.

AMONG THE INCIDENTS LISTED WAS A ROUNDUP OF PRISONERS BY THE NICARAGUAN NATIONAL GUARD NEAR THE CHAPEL OF SOFANO IN SIUNA LAST FEBRUARY. THE CAPUCHINS SAID PRISONERS WERE "KICKED, BEATEN WITH RIFLES ... HUNG BY THEIR FEET... TIED BY THE NECK AND PULLED LIKE ANIMALS; THEIR FACES WERE CUT WITH KNIVES; THEY WERE ROBBED ... WOMEN WERE RAPED ..."

THE CAPUCHIN MISSIONARIES ALSO STATED THAT NONE OF THE INDIVIDUALS TAKEN PRISONER HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR DISTRICTS; NO ACCUSATION AGAINST THEM HAS BEEN REPORTED PUBLICLY, AND NONE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO TRIAL. END QUOTE.

3. IN A RELATED MATTER, DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED A LETTER FROM CONGRESSMAN FRASER DATED AUGUST 9 IN WHICH THE CONGRESSMAN ASKS THAT THE EMBASSY (1) EXPRESS THE KEEN INTEREST OF SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS IN THE CONTINUED WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF FATHER CARDENAL AND (2) PROVIDE A DETAILED REPORT ON ANY ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST FATHER CARDENAL SINCE HIS APPEARANCE BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. TEXT OF FRASER LETTER FOLLOWS. QUOTE: DEAR MR. SECRETARY: AS YOU KNOW, MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED WITH THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF WITNESSES WHO RETURN TO THEIR OWN COUNTRIES AFTER HAVING TESTIFIED BEFORE US.

I AM DISTURBED BY REPORTS OF REPERCUSSIONS AGAINST THE

JESUIT PRIEST, FERNANDO CARDENAL, WHO TESTIFIED BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN NICARAGUA ON JUNE 8, 1976.

ACCORDING TO ARTICLES WHICH APPEARED IN LA PRENSA ON JULY 1 AND IN DIARIO LAS AMERICAS ON JULY 2, THE NICARAGUAN CONGRESS IS DRAFTING A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING FATHER CARDENAL FOR HAVING GIVEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THIS SUBCOMMITTEE AND IS INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITY OF CHARGING HIM

WITH HIGH TREASON FOR HAVING DAMAGED NICARAGUA'S IMAGE BY REPORTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

ADDITIONALLY, THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY, GENERAL ROGER BERMUDEZ, WAS REPORTED TO HAVE ANNOUNCED IN A JULY 9 PRESS CONFERENCE THAT FATHER CARDENAL WOULD BE FIRED FROM HIS POSITION AS A PROFESSOR IN THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY BECAUSE HE WAS A PROVEN SUBVERSIVE. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE IS NO RECORD OF FATHER CARDENAL'S HAVING BEEN "PROVEN" OR EVEN FORMALLY CHARGED AS A SUBVERSIVE(SIC) WHICH LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT FATHER CARDENAL'S APPEARANCE BEFORE THIS SUBCOMMITTEE HAS BEEN TAKEN AS IPSO FACTO PROOF OF HIS BEING A SUBVERSIVE (SIC).

IN VIEW BOTH OF THESE REPORTS AND OF THE FREQUENT AND VICIOUSLY-WORDED DENUNCIATIONS OF FATHER CARDENAL THAT HAVE APPEARED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S SEMI-OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER, NOVEDADES, I REQUEST THAT OFFICIALS IN THE U.S. EMBASSY IN MANAGUA EXPRESS TO THE APPROPRIATE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THE KEEN INTEREST OF THE MEMBERS OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE IN THE CONTINUED WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF FATHER CARDENAL.

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IN ADDITION, I WOULD LIKE TO BE INFORMED IN DETAIL REGARDING THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE RESOLUTION CONDEMNING FATHER CARDENAL, THE INVESTIGATION INTO CHARGING HIM WITH HIGH TREASON, AND HIS REMOVAL FROM HIS UNIVERSITY POST, AS WELL AS ANY OTHER OFFICIAL OR NON-OFFICIAL, LEGAL OR EXTRA-LEGAL MEASURES THAT MAY HAVE BEEN EITHER TAKEN OR PROPOSED SINCE FATHER CARDENAL'S APPEARANCE BEFORE THIS SUBCOMMITTEE.

I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE. SINCERELY, DONALD M. FRASER. END QUOTE.

5. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON THESE REQUESTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO SENT BY SEPTTEL A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON ANOTHER

POSSIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION FORWARDED BY SENATOR  
CRANSTON'S OFFICE. HABIB

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